

Anticarcinogenic effect of saffron (*Crocus sativus* L.) and its ingredients

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ABSTRACT

Conventional and newly emerging treatment procedures such as chemotherapy, catalytic therapy, photodynamic therapy and radiotherapy have not succeeded in reversing the outcome of cancer diseases to any drastic extent, which has led researchers to investigate alternative treatment options. The extensive repertoire of traditional medicinal knowledge systems from various parts of the world are being re-investigated for their healing properties *Crocus sativus* L., commonly known as saffron, is the raw material for one of the most expensive spice in the world, and it has been used in folk medicine for centuries. Chemical analysis has shown the presence of more than 150 components in saffron stigmas. The more powerful components of saffron are crocin, crocetin and safranal. Studies in animal models and with cultured human malignant cell lines have demonstrated antitumor and cancer preventive activities of saffron and its main ingredients, possible mechanisms for these activities are discussed. More direct evidence of anticancer effectiveness of saffron as chemo-preventive agent may come from trials that use actual reduction of cancer incidence as the primary endpoint. This review discusses recent literature data and our results on the cancer chemopreventive activities of saffron and its main ingredients.

KEYWORDS

Anticarcinogenic effect . its ingredients . saffron

REFERENCES

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